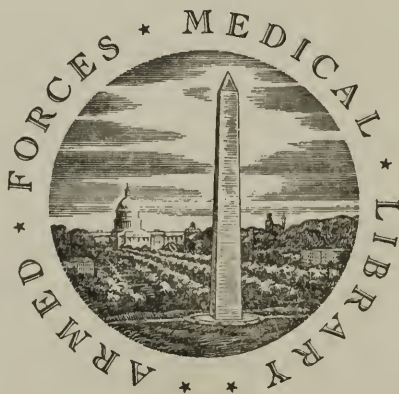


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FOUNDED 1836

WASHINGTON, D.C.

BOSTON

MEDICAL POLICE.



BOSTON :

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1808

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BOSTON MEDICAL POLICE.

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THE Standing Committee of the Association of Boston Physicians for the year, commencing on the first Wednesday of March, 1807, having been instructed to propose a code of Medical Police, to be submitted to the consideration of the Association at their next annual meeting, beg leave to report :

1. **THAT** having examined the different publications of Gregory, Rush and Percival upon this subject, they first selected from them such articles, as seemed most applicable to the circumstances of the profession in this place.

2. **THAT** with these articles as a ground work, they have proceeded to form a short system of police, containing general principles for the government of this Association, by making such alterations, or additions to them, as they thought necessary for rendering them both practicable and useful.

3. **THAT** they have added such new articles, as they judged conducive to the general views of this Association, and adapted to the particular situation of medical practice in America.

THE result of which is submitted in the form following :

CONSULTATIONS.

CONSULTATIONS should be encouraged in difficult and protracted cases, as they give rise to confidence, energy, and more enlarged views in practice. On such occasions, no rivalry or jealousy should be indulged; candour, justice and all due respect should be exercised towards the physician who first attended; and as *he* may be presumed to be best acquainted with the patient and his family, he should deliver all the medical directions as agreed upon. It should be the province, however, of the senior consulting Physician to propose the necessary questions to the sick.

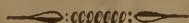
THE consulting Physician is never to visit without the attending one, unless by the desire of the latter, or when, as in sudden emergency, he is not to be found. No discussion of the case should take place before the patient or his friends; and no prognostications should be delivered, which were not the result of previous deliberation and concurrence. Theoretical debates, indeed, should generally be avoided in consultation, as occasioning perplexity and loss of time; for there may be much diversity of opinion on speculative points, with perfect agreement on those modes of practice, which are founded, not on hypothesis, but on experience and observation. Physicians in consultation, whatever may be their private resentments or opinions of one another, should divest themselves of all partialities, and think of nothing but what will most effectually contribute to the relief of those under their care.

IF a Physician cannot lay his hand to his heart and say, that his mind is perfectly open to conviction, from whatever quarter it may come, he should in honour decline the consultation.

ALL discussions and debates in consultations, are to be held secret and confidential.

MANY advantages may arise from two consulting together, who are men of candour, and have mutual confidence in each other's honour. A remedy may occur to one, which did not to another, and a physician may want resolution or a confidence in his own opinion, to prescribe a powerful, but precarious remedy, on which, however, the life of his patient may depend ; in this case, a concurrent opinion may fix his own. But when such mutual confidence is wanting, a consultation had better be declined, especially if there is reason to believe, that sentiments delivered with openness, are to be communicated abroad, or to the family concerned ; and if, in consequence of this, either gentleman is to be made responsible for the event.

THE utmost punctuality should be observed in consultation visits ; and to avoid loss of time, it will be expedient to establish the space of fifteen minutes, as an allowance for delay, after which, the meeting might be considered as postponed for a new appointment.



INTERFERENCES.

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MEDICINE is a liberal profession ; the practitioners are, or ought to be, men of education ; and their expectations of business and employment should be founded on their degrees of qualification, not on artifice and insinuation. A certain undefinable species of assiduities and attentions, therefore, to families usually employing another, is to be considered as beneath the dignity of a regular practitioner, and as making a mere trade of a learned profession ; and all officious interferences in cases of sickness in such families, evince a meanness of disposition, unbecoming the character of a Physician or a Gentleman. No meddling inquiries should be made concerning them, nor hints

given relative to their nature and treatment, nor any selfish conduct pursued, that may, directly or indirectly, tend to weaken confidence in the Physicians or Surgeons, who have the care of them.

WHEN a Physician is called to a patient, who has been under the care of another gentleman of the faculty, before any examination of the case he should ascertain, whether that gentleman has discontinued his visits, and whether the patient considers himself as under his care, in which case, he is not to assume the charge of the patient, nor to give his advice, (excepting in instances of sudden attacks) without a regular consultation ; and if such previously attending gentleman has been dismissed, or has voluntarily relinquished the patient, his practice should be treated with candour, and justified so far as probity and truth will permit ; for the want of success in the primary treatment of the disorder, is no impeachment of professional skill and knowledge.

IT frequently happens, that a Physician, in incidental communications with the patients of others, or with their friends, may have their cases stated to him in so direct a manner, as not to admit of his declining to pay attention to them. Under such circumstances, his observations should be delivered with the most delicate propriety and reserve. He should not interfere in the curative plans pursued ; and should even recommend a steady adherence to them, if they appear to merit approbation.

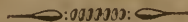


DIFFERENCES OF PHYSICIANS.

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THE differences of Physicians, when they end in appeals to the publick, generally hurt the contending parties ; but, what is of more

consequence, they discredit the profession, and expose the faculty itself to contempt and ridicule. Whenever such differences occur, as may affect the honour and dignity of the profession, and cannot immediately be terminated, or do not come under the character of violation of the special rules of the association otherwise provided for, they should be referred to the arbitration of a sufficient number of members of the association, according to the nature of the dispute ; but, neither the subject matter of such references, nor the adjudication, should, if it can be avoided, be communicated to the publick, as they may be personally injurious to the individuals concerned, and can hardly fail to hurt the general credit of the faculty.



DISCOURAGEMENT OF QUACKERY.

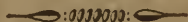
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THE use of Quack medicines should be discouraged by the faculty, as disgraceful to the profession, injurious to health, and often destructive even of life. No Physician or Surgeon, therefore, should dispense a secret nostrum, whether it be his invention or exclusive property ; for if it is of real efficacy the concealment of it is inconsistent with beneficence, and professional liberality ; and, if mystery alone give it value and importance, such craft implies, either disgraceful ignorance, or fraudulent avarice.

CONDUCT FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE MEDICAL CHARACTER.

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THE *esprit du corps* is a principle of action, founded in human nature, and, when duly regulated, is both rational and laudable. Every man, who enters into a fraternity, engages, by a tacit compact, not only to submit to the laws, but to promote the honour and interest of the association, so far as they are consistent with morality and the general good of mankind. A Physician, therefore, should cautiously guard against whatever may injure the general respectability of the profession, and should avoid all contumelious representations of the faculty at large, all general charges against their selfishness or improbity, or the indulgence of an affected or jocular scepticism, concerning the efficacy and utility of the healing art.



FEEs.

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GENERAL rules are adopted by the faculty in every town, relative to the pecuniary acknowledgements of their patients ; and it should be deemed a point of honour to adhere to them ; and every deviation from, or evasion of these rules, should be considered as meriting the indignation and contempt of the fraternity.

GRATUITOUS services to the poor, are by no means prohibited ; the characteristical beneficence of the profession, is inconsistent with

fordid views and avaricious rapacity. The poor of every description should be the objects of our peculiar care. Dr. Boerhaave used to say, they were his best patients, because God was their paymaster.

It is obvious also, that an average fee, as suited to the general rank of patients, must be an inadequate compensation from the rich, (who often require attendance not absolutely necessary) and yet too large to be expected from that class of citizens, who would feel a reluctance in calling for assistance, without making some decent and satisfactory remuneration.



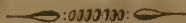
EXEMPTION FROM CHARGES.

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THE clergymen of the town, and all members of the medical profession, together with their families, should be attended gratuitously ; but visits should not be obtruded officiously, as such civility may give rise to embarrassments, or interfere with that choice on which confidence depends.

BUT distant members of the faculty, when they request attendance, should be expected to defray the charges of travelling ; and such of the clergy from abroad, as are qualified by their fortunes or incomes, to make a reasonable remuneration for medical attendance, are not more privileged, than any other order of patients.

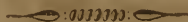
OMISSION to charge, on account of the wealthy circumstances of the Physician, are an injury to the profession, as it is defrauding, in a degree, the common funds for its support, when fees are dispensed with, which might justly be claimed.



VICARIOUS OFFICES.

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WHENEVER a Physician officiates for another by his desire, in consequence of sickness or absence, if for a short time only, the attendance should be performed gratuitously as to the physician, and with the utmost delicacy towards the professional character of the gentleman previously connected with the patient.



SENIORITY.

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A REGULAR and academical education furnishes the only presumptive evidence of professional ability, and is so honourable and beneficial, that it gives a just claim to pre-eminence among Physicians at large, in proportion to the degree in which it may be enjoyed and improved. Nevertheless, as industry and talents may furnish exceptions to this general rule, and this method may be liable to difficul-

ties, in the application, seniority, among practitioners of this town, should be determined by the period of publick and acknowledged practice as a Physician or Surgeon in the same. This arrangement being clear and obvious, is adapted to remove all grounds of dispute amongst medical gentlemen; and it secures the regular continuance of the established order of precedency, which might otherwise be subject to troublesome interruptions, by new settlers, perhaps not long stationary in the place.

JOHN WARREN.
LEMUEL HAYWARD.
JOHN FLEET.



AT a meeting of the Boston Medical Association, held at Vila's on the first Wednesday in March, 1808, the Committee of the preceding year, having, in conformity with their instructions, reported on a code of Medical Police, which was read and accepted by sections, it was voted,

THAT the Report of the Committee be recommitted, with instructions to print five hundred copies of the same and that they present to each member of the Association three copies of the Report, and distribute the remaining copies to such other Physicians of the State as they may think proper.

Voted likewise, That the thanks of the Association be presented to the Committee for their judicious and useful Report.

J. GORHAM, Secretary.



Med. Hist.

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